equal to (or contains) "RCV_AV_Checker_List". The identifier of a VCR can be retrieved from the VCP Table, when said selected VCA section comprises a VCR Identifier in its "VCR_Id" field.

- If the identifier (called VCR_S_Id) of a VCR can be retrieved from the VCP Table:
- Continues in step (1014) in order to retrieve, from the VCR identified by VCR_S_Id, the identifier of a VCA which has authority to build a VC for the received file.
- If the identifier of a VCR cannot be retrieved form the VCP Table:
- Continues in step (1016) in order to retrieve the identifier (VCA_S_Id) of a Default VCA, from the VCP Table (1020).

Advantages of the present invention include retrieving an existing Virus-free Certificate from a cache. This is a very efficient operation in term of time and performance, compared with generating a new virus-free Certificate; Also, a virus-free Cache (VCC) provides systems with existing virus-free Certificates (VCs which are already built), and therefore off-loads Virus-free Certificate Authorities (VCAs). The overall performance of Virus-free Certificate Authorities (VCAs) is improved because VCAs have less virus-free Certificates to generate. Further, multiple and distributed Virus-free Certificate Caches (VCCs) are usually attached to the LAN/WAN network. They are preferably placed close to systems requiring virus-free Certificates (VCs). Because a VCC is generally closer than a VCA, the response time for retrieving a virus-free Certificate from a VCC is therefore improved compared with the response time which is necessary to retrieve a virus-free Certificate from a VCA.

Still further, the traffic, across the LAN/WAN network, generated by the virus-free Certificate requests is reduced. Less requests for virus-free certificates are sent to the Virus-free Certificate Authorities (VCAs).

While the invention has been particularly shown and described with respect to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing